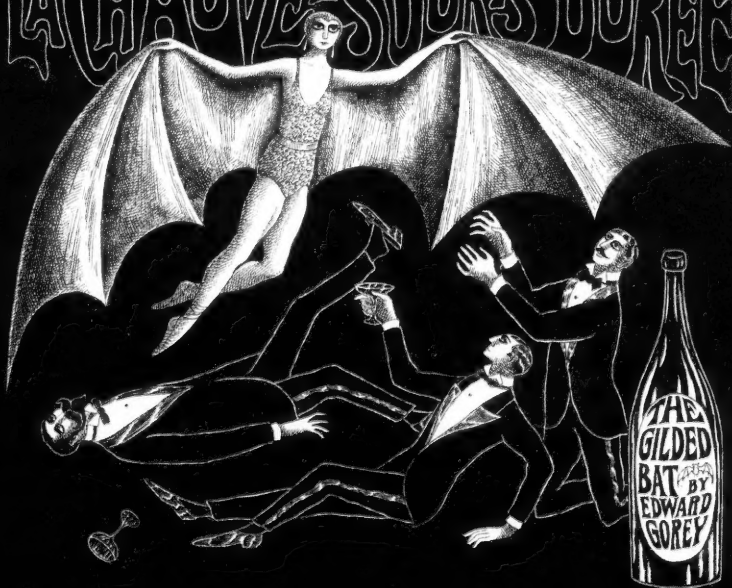


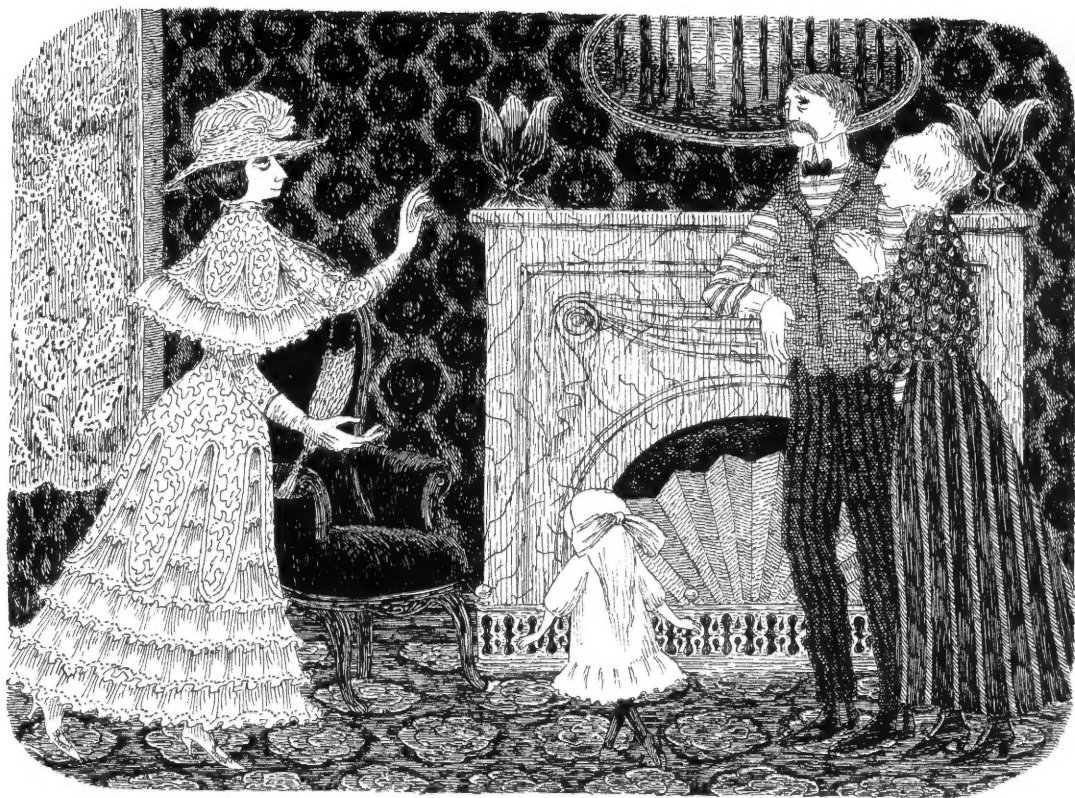
LA CHAUVE-SOURIS DORÉE



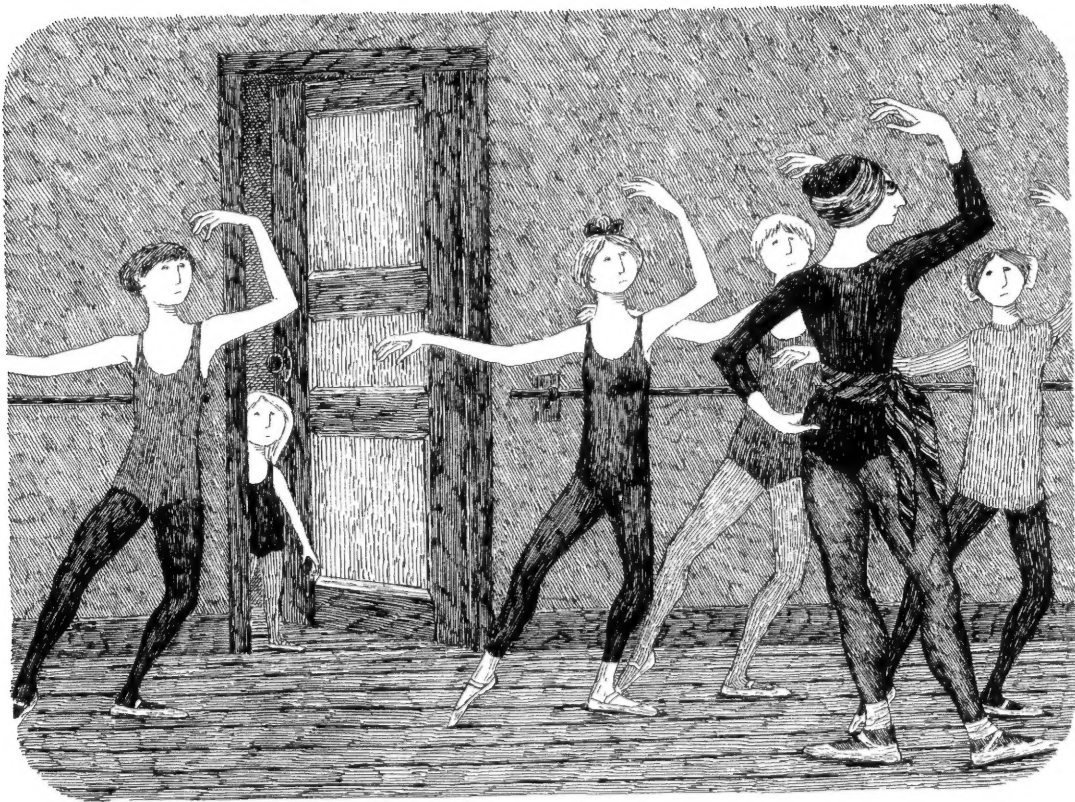




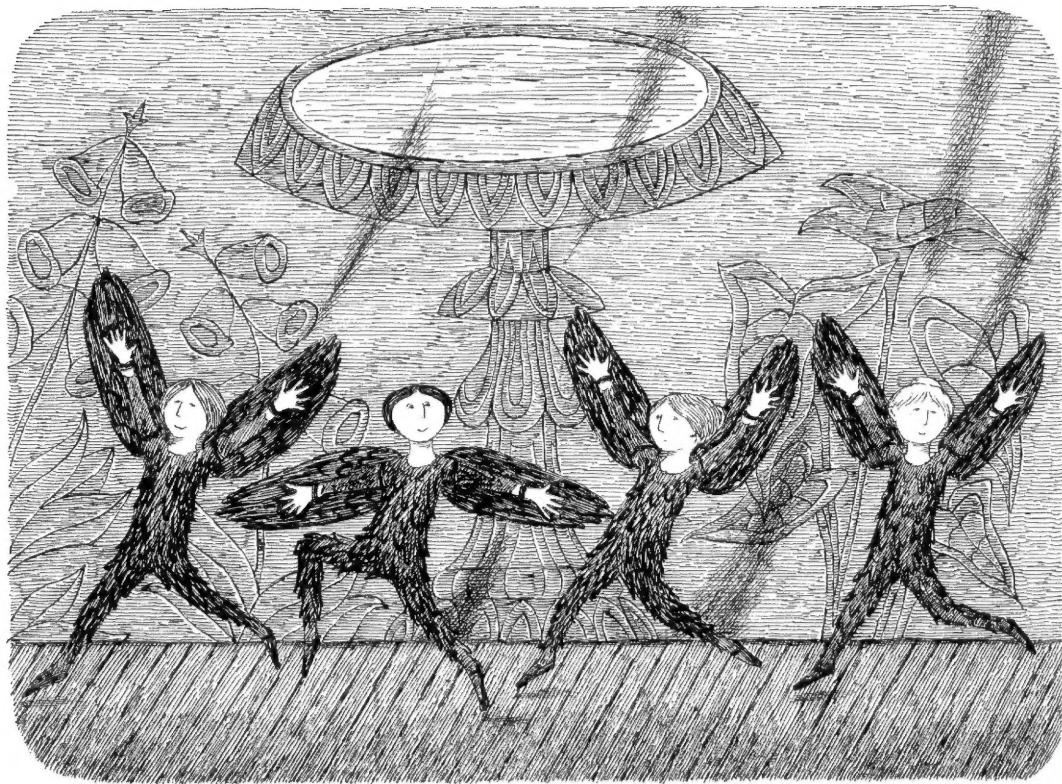
Maudie was only five when she was discovered gazing at a dead bird by Madame Trepidovska.



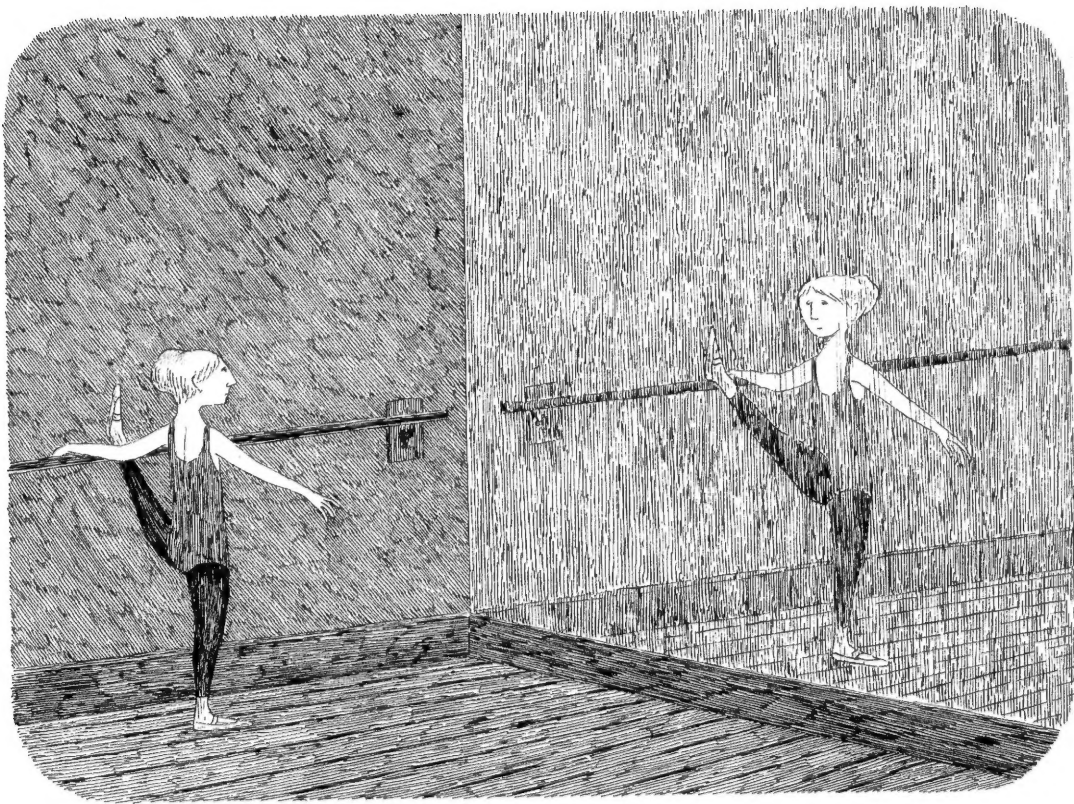
Madame, once *assoluta* at the Maryinsky, informed the Splaytoes that the child was to be her pupil.



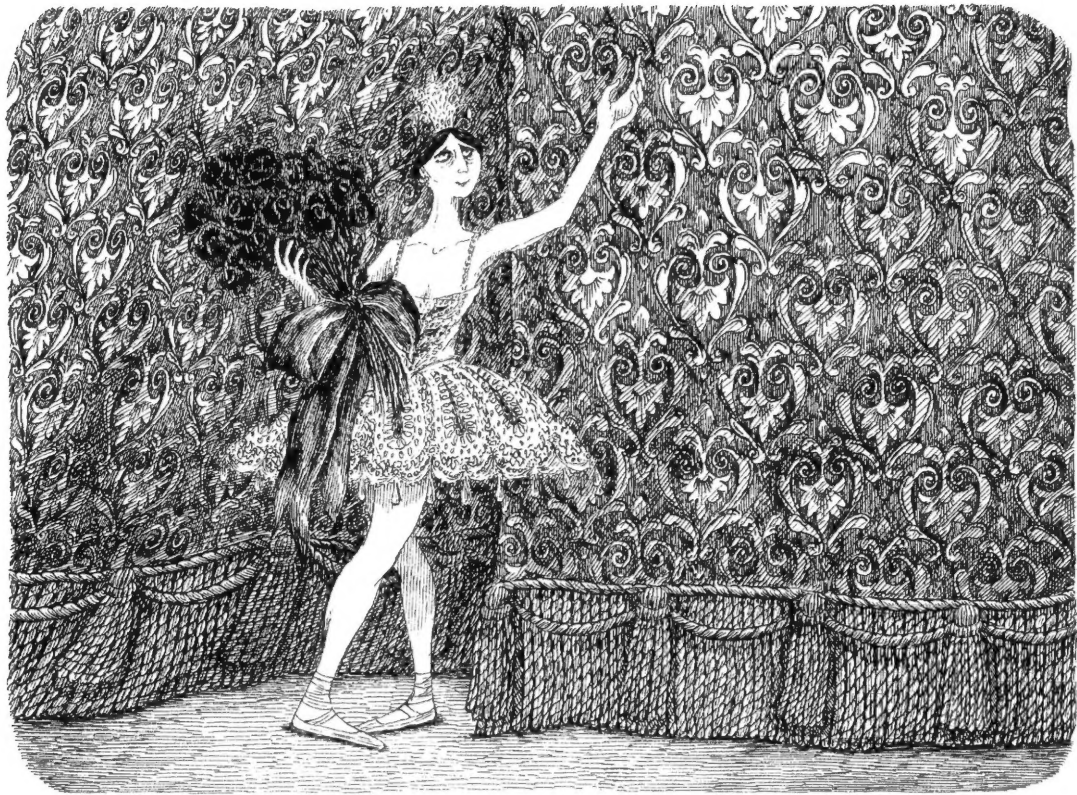
Long years of study began in her ballet school above a row of shops.



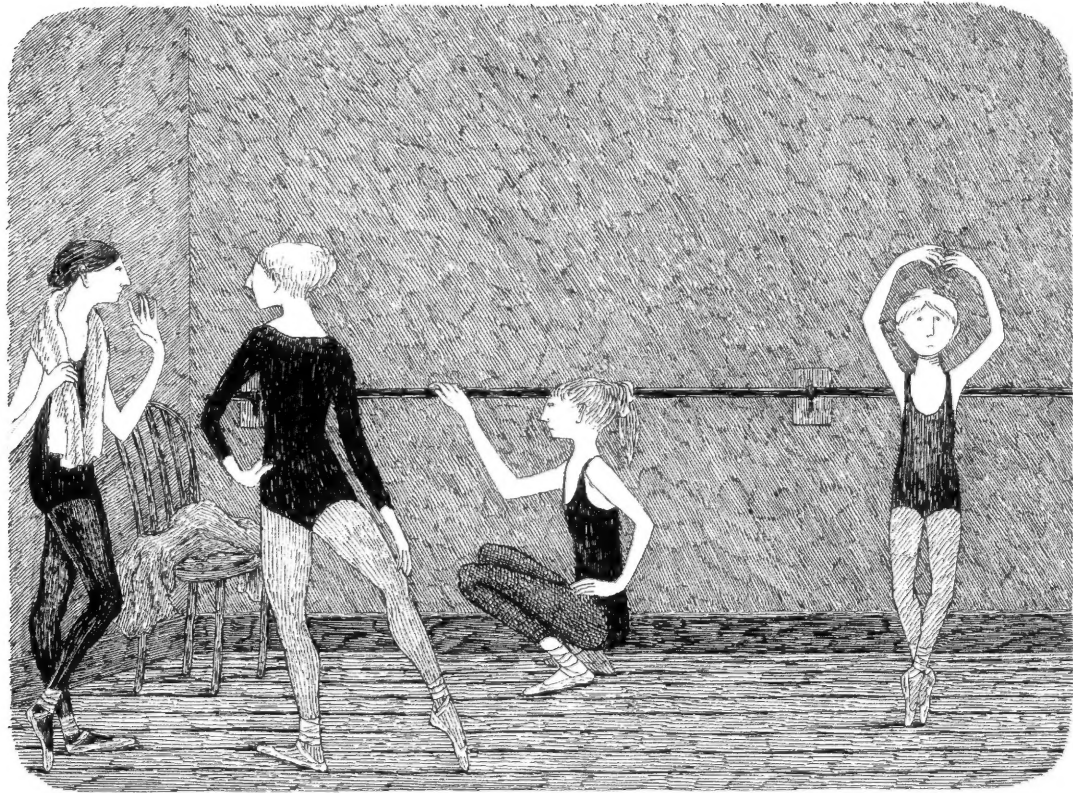
Maudie first came before the public as a sparrow in *Bain d'Oiseaux*, devised by Madame to display her students' abilities.



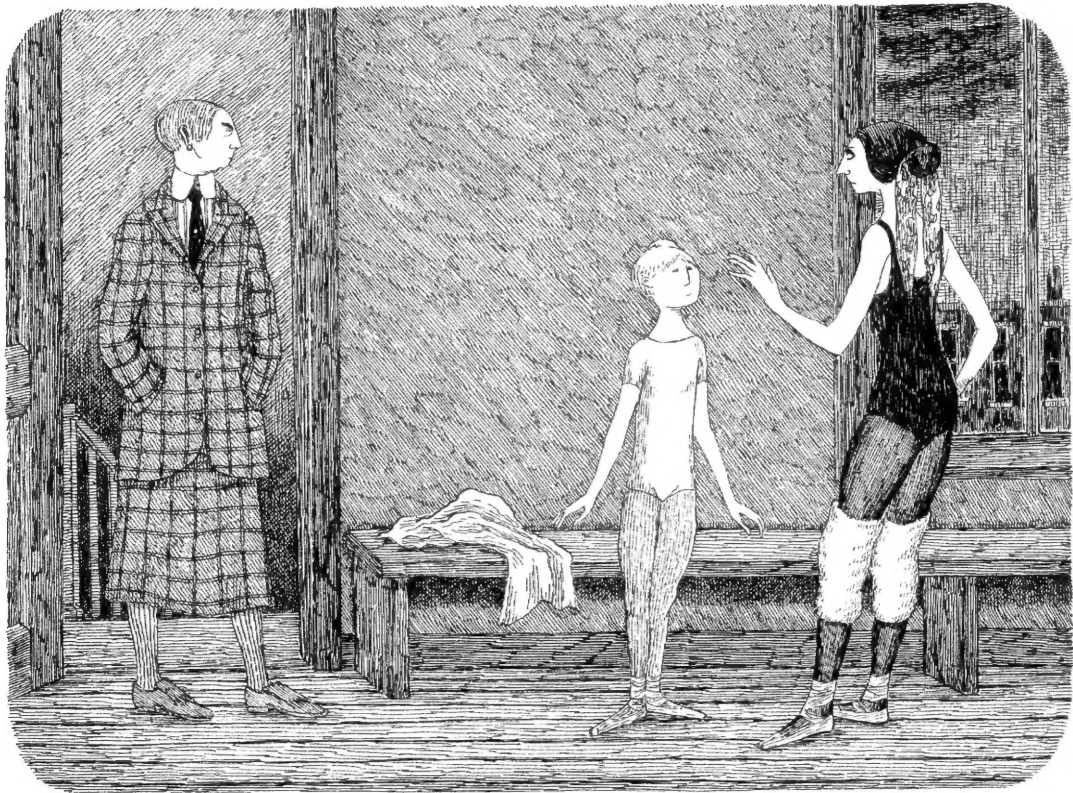
Her life was rather monotonous.



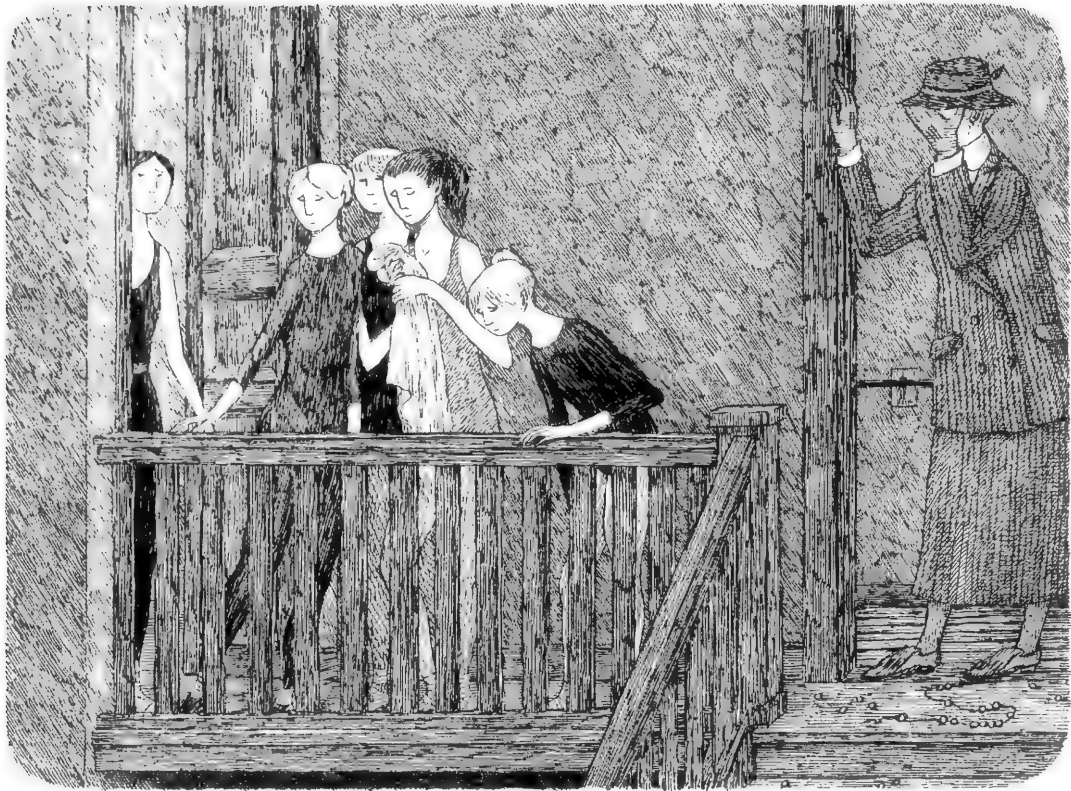
She became aware of what real ballet was when Madame took her to one of Solepsiskaya's innumerable farewell performances.



Eventually she was allowed to go up on point.



Miss Marshgrass, the school's backer, took exception to Madame's interest in Maud; there were scenes.



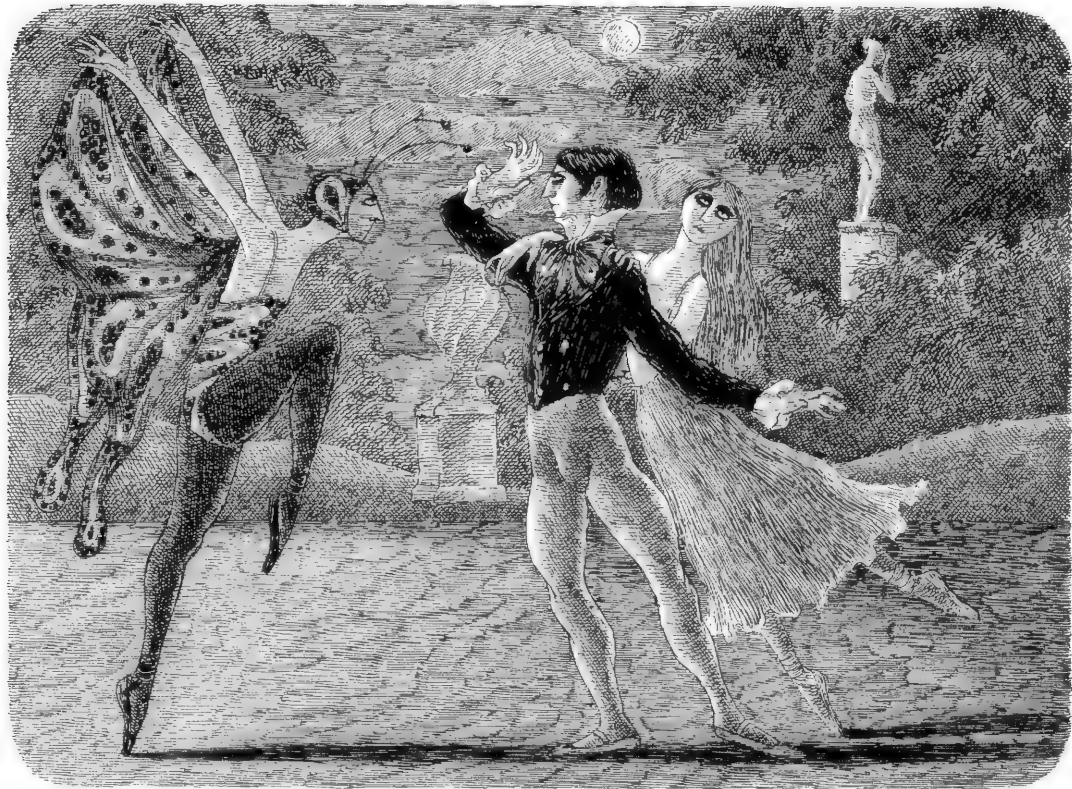
Madame had to be removed to a private lunatic asylum, and the school was shut down.



Maud obtained a place in the corps of the Ballet Hochepot.



For the next two years she danced in the provinces.



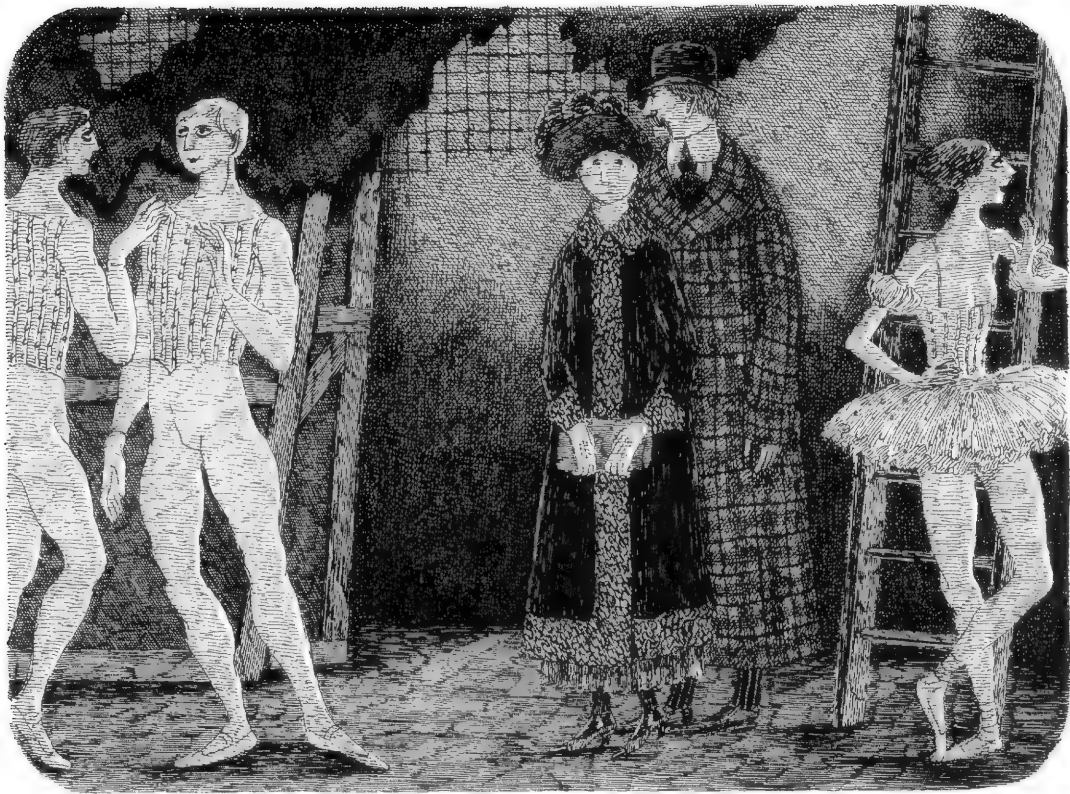
She was given her first solo as the *Papillon Enragé* in a revival of Golopine's *Jardin de Regrets*; others followed.



Her life went on being fairly tedious.



After Federojenska did a grand jeté into the wings one matinee and was never seen again, Maud took over *Oiseau de Glace* to great acclaim.



Her parents only once came to visit her backstage.



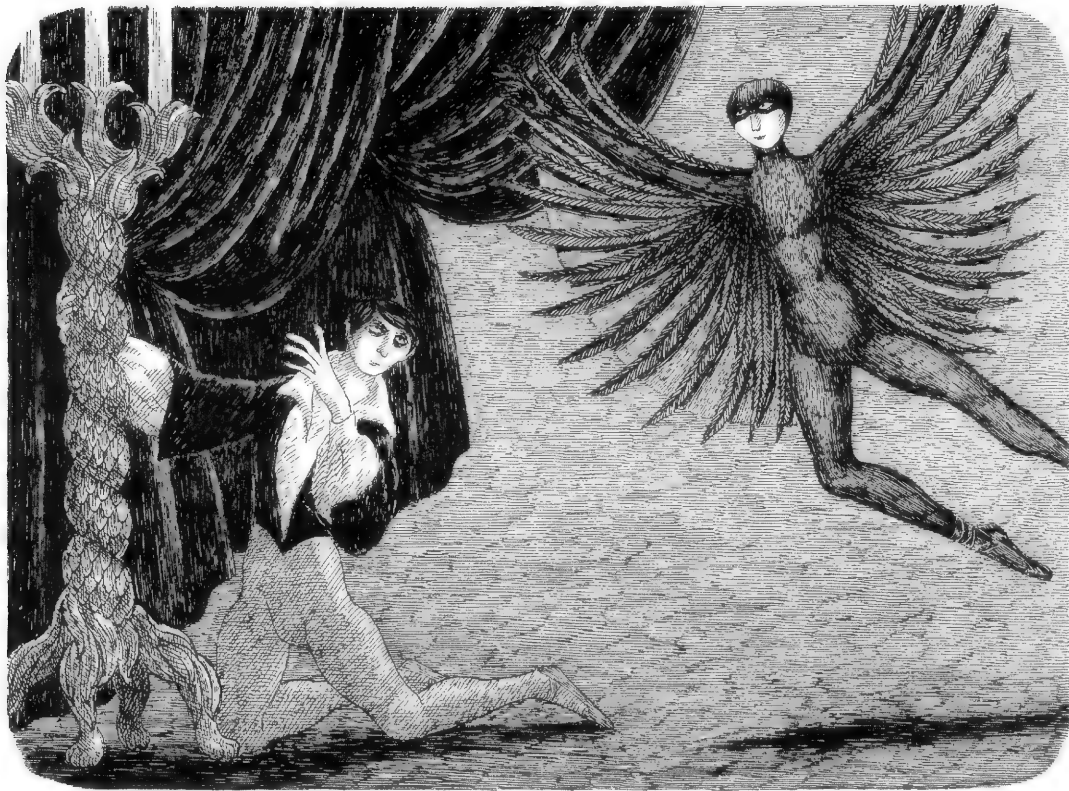
Baron de Zabrus invited her to join his company, the most renowned in Europe.



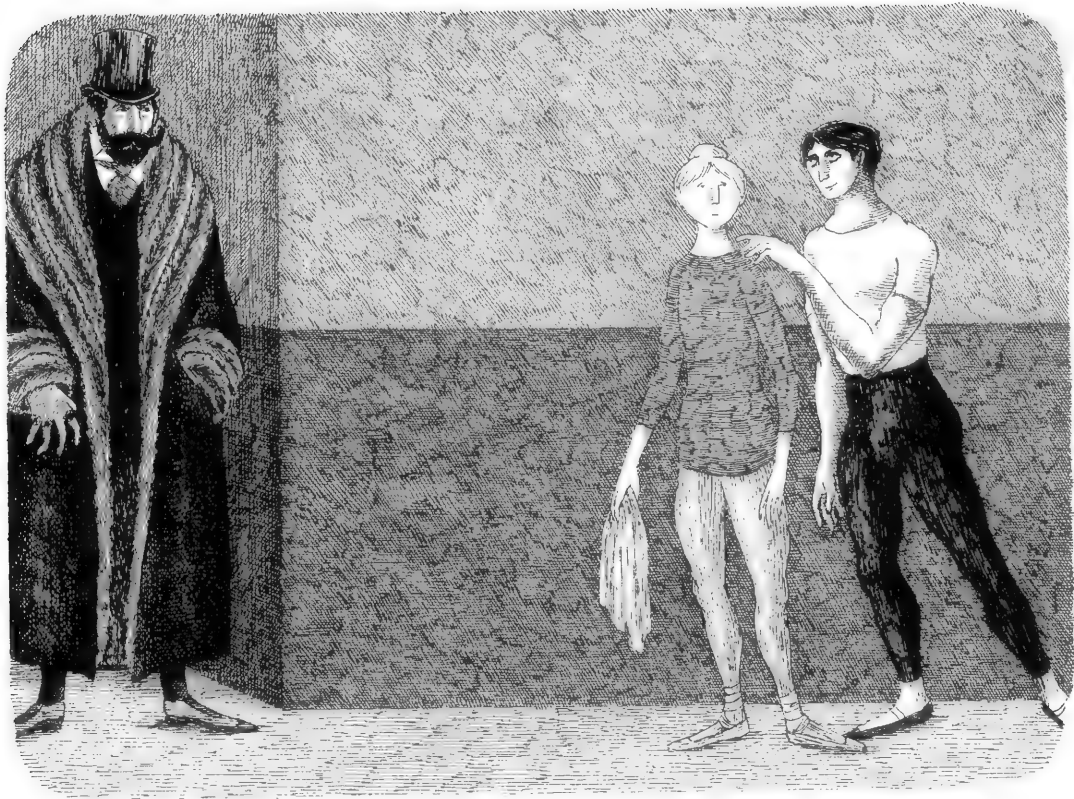
He changed her name to something more exotic.



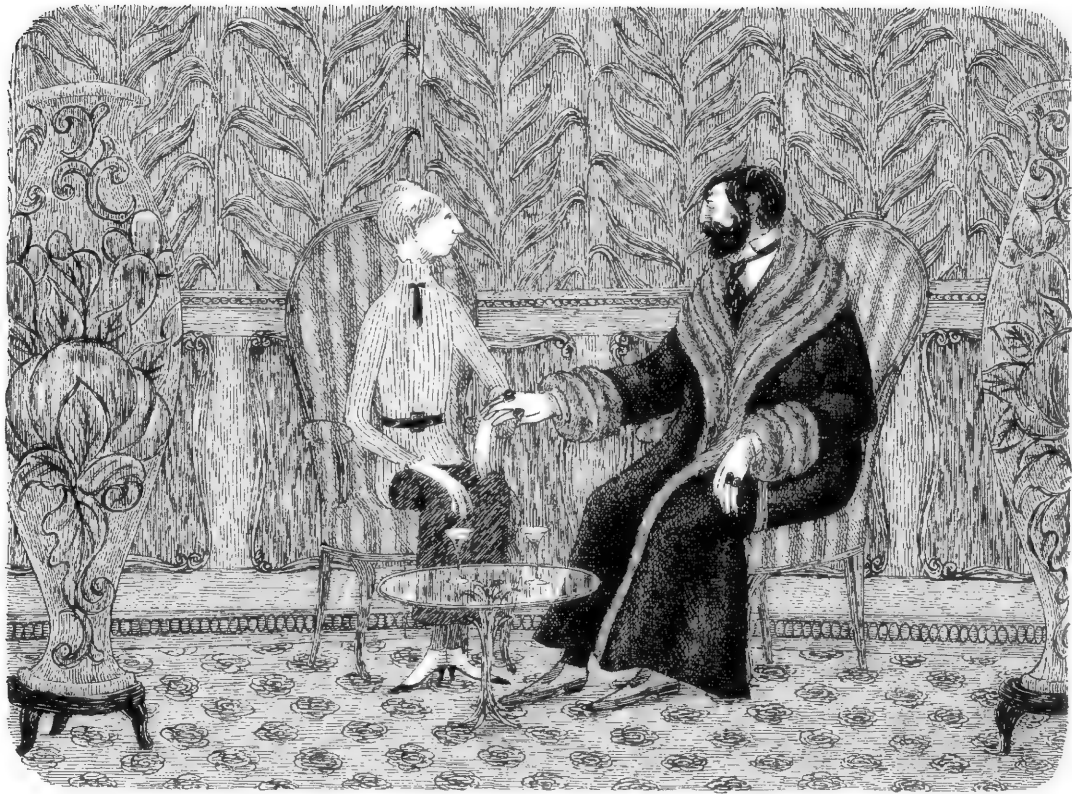
Her life did not cease to be somewhat dreary.



The Baron chose her to dance a new pas de deux, *Le Corbeau*
(d'après E. A. Poe), with Ibiskovski.



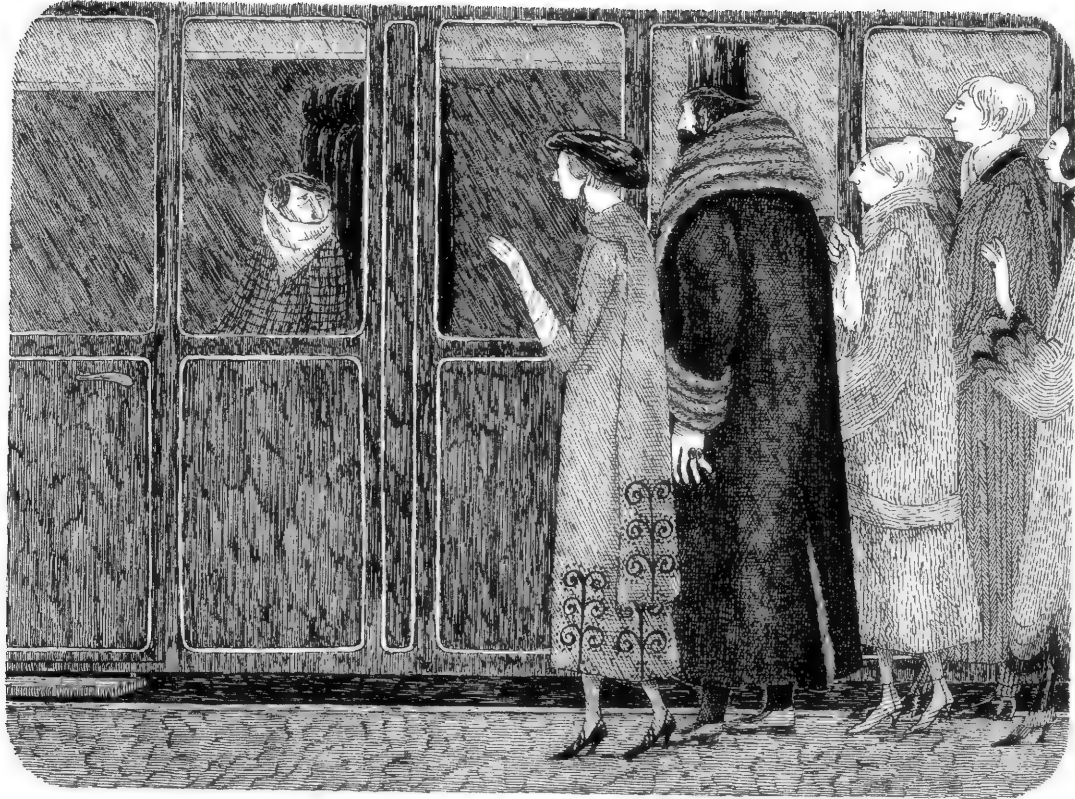
Serge developed an unlikely infatuation for her.



The Baron told her that only art meant anything.



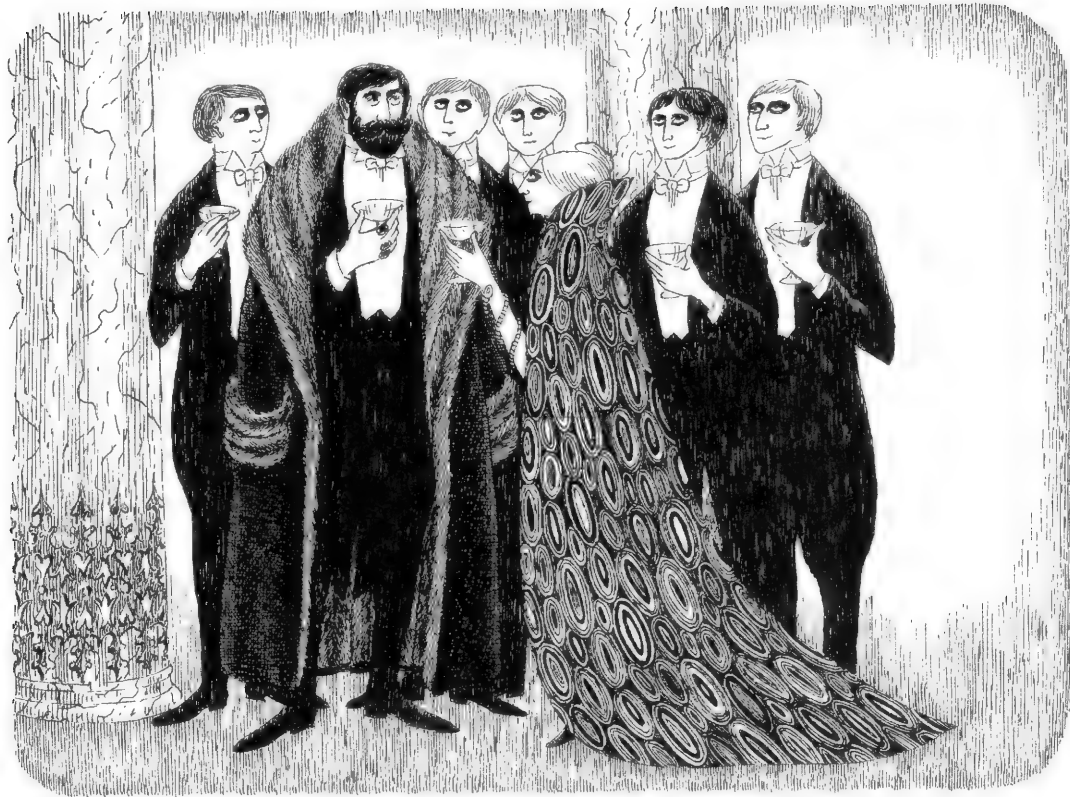
Plastikoff created for her a new ballet, *La Chauve-Souris Dorée*; it was his greatest work.



Serge began to cough a lot, and had to go away to a sanitorium outside Zug.



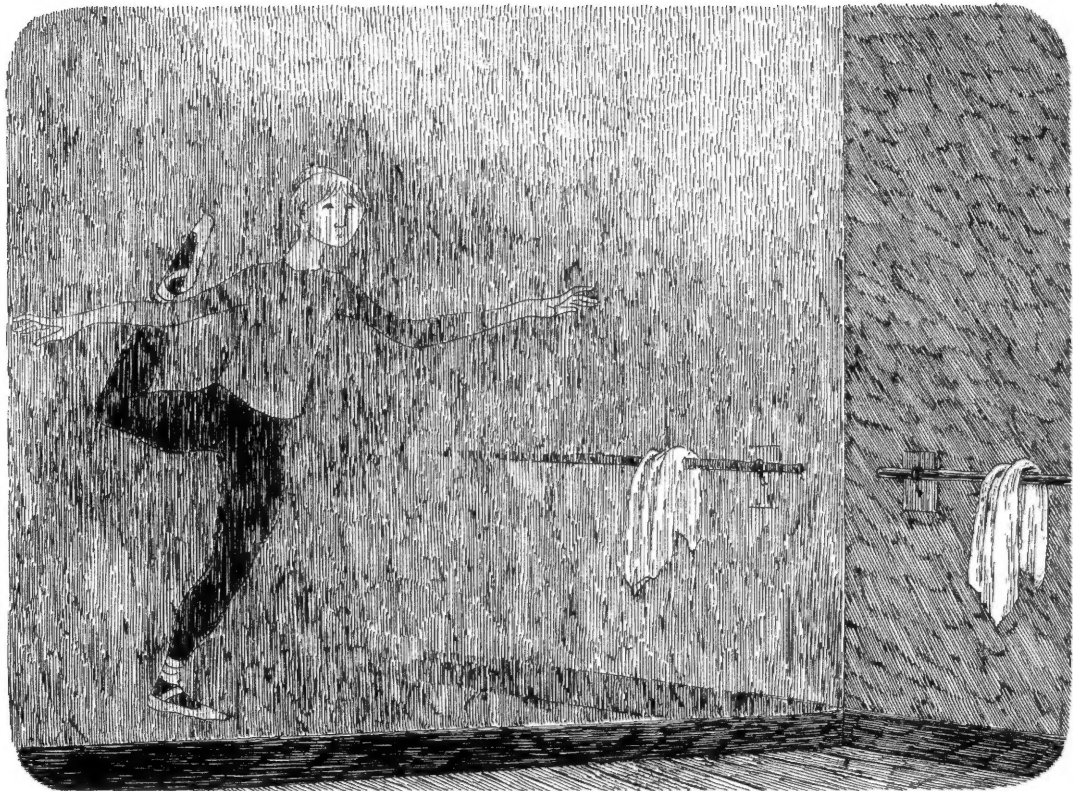
Mirella all at once became chic and mysterious.



She was seen everywhere with the Baron.



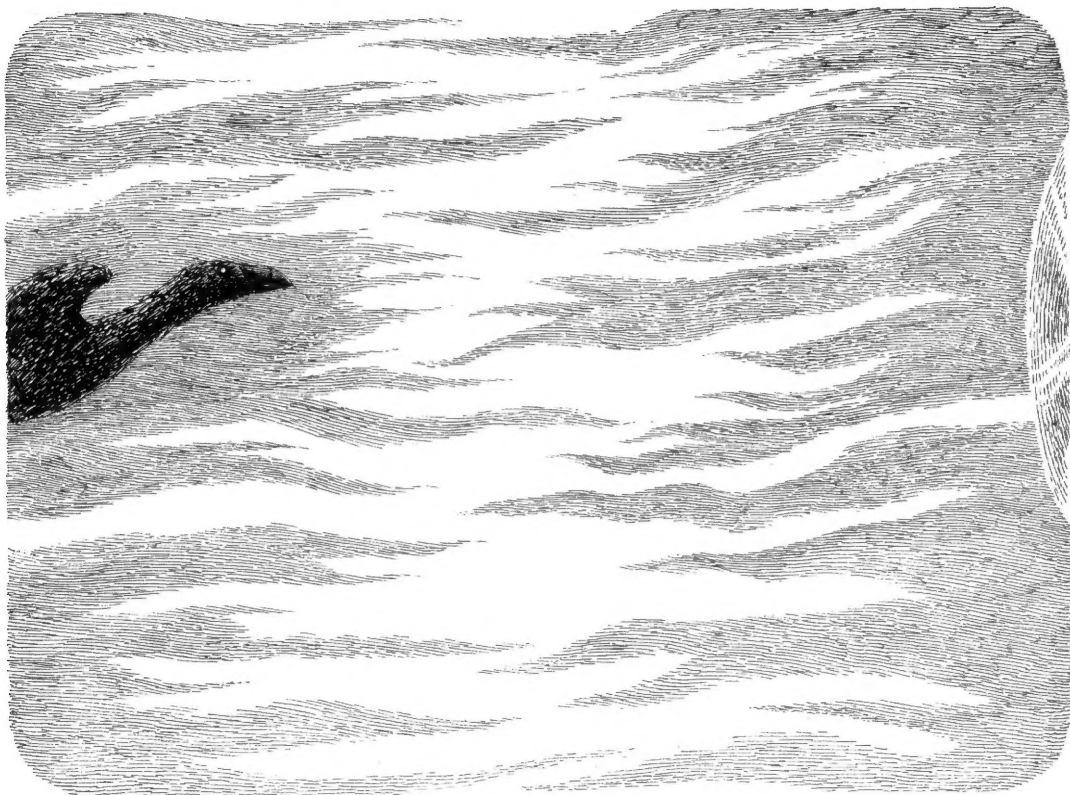
She had become the reigning ballerina of the age, and one of its symbols.



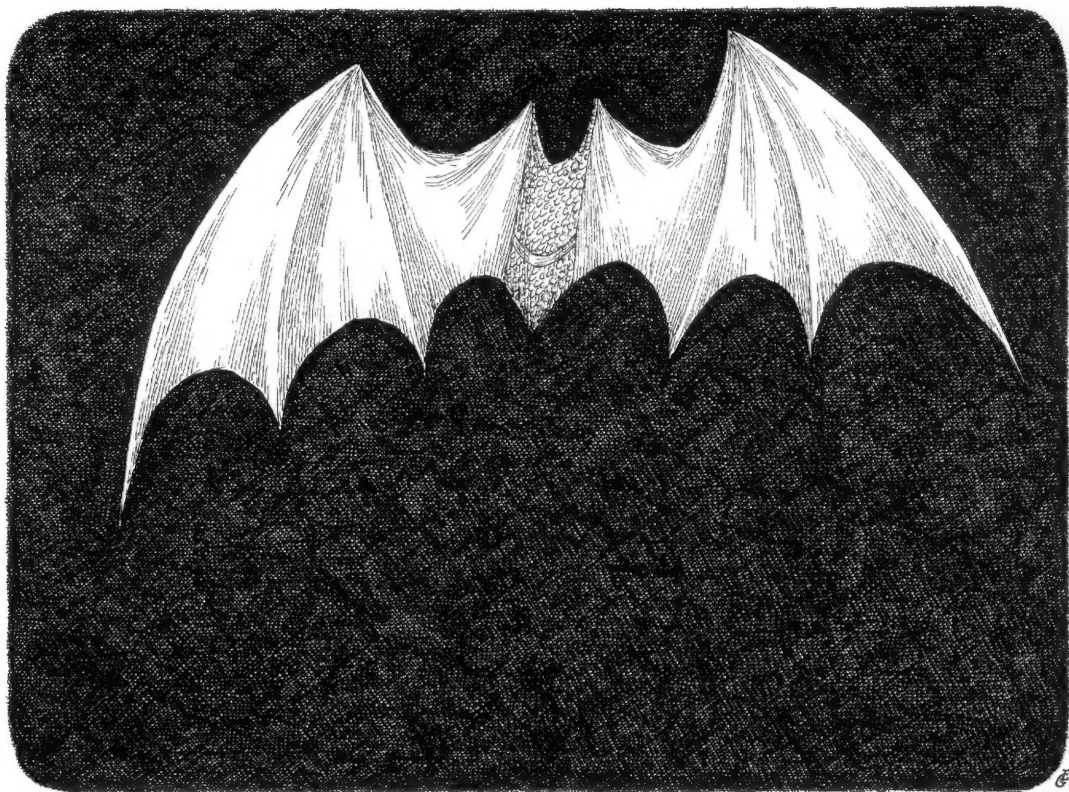
Her life was really no different from what it had ever been.



She was asked to dance in a charity gala before royalty at Cagnes-sur-Mer.



Over the Camargue a great dark bird flew into the propeller of the aeroplane.



At the gala her costume was suspended from the centre of the stage while the music for her most famous variation was played in her memory.